

Collaborating to Evolve



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Ever-changing technology and data-driven innovation are creating new pathways to treatments, but more can be done to ensure all patients can access the care they need.

We live in a time when tackling disease is urgent and in high demand. Just as medicine and technology evolve to unprecedented levels of sophistication, so do new, complex diseases that affect growing populations around the world. We need solutions that respond to our ever-changing lives, which means our solutions must be able to evolve. Fortunately, new tools and perspectives are sparking innovation and vital collaboration.

In the past few years, advances in biomedical research have opened pathways that allow us to edit genetic material, use stem cells to treat disease and destroy cancer cells with novel immunotherapies. These advances (and many more) have vastly improved our capacity to

tackle tough challenges in medicine. Also, developments in technology have allowed researchers to put patients and public health at the center of many studies, resulting in large data sets that give us the ability to investigate new hypotheses for therapies and cures.

Yet novel interventions aren't available to all patients, and we are experiencing an information overload. How do we adjust to all of these changes in health care? How do we ensure new tools benefit everyone?

At the Helmsley Charitable Trust, we believe that a collaborative environment is crucial for sharing data, ideas and solutions. Having supported hundreds of millions of dollars in health and medical

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research, we’ve learned and practiced some important lessons, including:

- Don’t push collaboration. Allow participants to identify who they trust and want to work with, and ensure goals are aligned among everyone.
- Patience is key. Creating a collaborative environment requires time and flexibility.
- Create a system and a plan. Well-defined governance allows for clear decision-making, and milestones allow you to assess progress and mitigate problems.
- Resources enhance innovation. Ensure funding is sustainable to allow for creative and thoughtful solutions.
- Exit projects responsibly. A clearly designed plan prevents failures and continues to build on the work already done.
- Foster an environment of trust. Last but not least, participants should feel comfortable sharing ideas, communicating and giving constructive criticism.

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happen in isolation. Collaboration is essential as data multiply and research funding becomes scarce.

Fortunately, innovators today have created platforms for collecting and analyzing large data sets. When data are actionable, if the results of large analyses provide clues for interventions, we can tangibly improve the lives of people with diseases.

With the rise of social media and the ability to easily share information, the patient’s voice has become more prominent than ever before. Patients’ opinions are essential in the development of interventions. We must create a framework where all patients can be heard and contribute to our efforts.

At Helmsley, we are working on a collaborative health policy initiative that uses the patient’s voice to improve access to therapies and technologies for type 1 diabetes (T1D). This partnership between Helmsley, JDRF and T1D Exchange paves a path toward greater adoption of effective therapies that could transform diabetes care. By bringing in the patient’s and clinician’s perspectives, along with data, we hope to identify roadblocks preventing people with T1D from accessing technologies that can ease the burden of their disease.

Our lifestyles are radically evolving — from how we eat, exercise and work, to how we treat disease. We are moving toward a world where collaboration connects all disciplines and stakeholders, in the hope of creating better, longer, healthier lives.

IMPORTANT LESSONS

1

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2

Patience is key

3

Create a system and a plan

4

Resources enhance innovation

5

Exit projects responsibly

6

Foster an environment of trust